



Dirk Hoksbergen (1800-1870)
"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

by Joh. Lagendijk

Translated by Gilbert Zekveld

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Some introductory notes on the Hoksbergen Family

By G. Ph. Scheltens

*(A loose translation with some abridgement by Wes
Bredenhof, the great-great-great-great-grandson of
Dirk Hoksbergen.)*

Dirk Hoksbergen was born on May 4, 1800 at Oldebroek, which contradicts information often given in histories of the Secession of 1834 (Afsheiding) and biographical dictionaries, which give his birthdate as January 5, 1800. The state archives of the province of Gelderland inform me that he was born on May 4 (and baptized on May 11) and not on January 5. I later found the reason for the discrepancy: his mother had died on January 5, 1809, when Dirk was 8 years old. His father died when Dirk was 15 years old. So it is understandable that this important date in the family was thought to be Dirk's birthday. His children and also his second wife did not know any better either, for when he died on February 19, 1870 at Kampen, his obituary said that he was a good 70 years old. In reality he had failed to reach his 70th birthday by three months.

Dirk was the second son from the second marriage. His father, Beert Hoksbergen, was married to Neeltje Beerds after being a widower for seven years. The first son, born in 1795, died in 1826.

Dirk himself was married at Oldebroek on February 21, 1823 to Matje Boekhuis. At Oldebroek, this family received one daughter and two sons. Dirk then moved from Oldebroek to the Marle neighbourhood, the area of the Wijhe congregation. His biography says that he moved to Veerhuizen, the area of the Heerde congregation.

This mistake is thus in every respect understandable.

It is much more understandable when you know that Wijhe is on the other side of the IJssel. The house where Dirk lived in Marle is still always being used. In that place, one son and one daughter were born to him.

This one son, Beert, is the great-great-grandfather of Berend Jan Hoksbergen who was born in Heerde on November 2, 1952.

In approximately 1831, Dirk moved to what is now Wilsum. He lived there on "De Oude Scheere", the first farmhouse east "Keulvoet." In that place, three daughters and two sons were born. The last of these, Eimert, was born on January 22, 1838, and he was the first of his own children whom he himself baptized.

His wife passed away on March 16, 1847. On October 16 of the same year, Dirk married Aaltje Netjes who was 26 years younger than he was. From this second marriage, while at Wilsum, there were born four sons and one daughter. I will spare you the names and the birth-dates. When he later moved to Kampen, one more daughter was born: Annigje. When she was 24 years old, she married Jan Proper, who was an organ-builder in Kampen.

So in total, 17 (!) children were born to him. From the first marriage, five children died after merely a few days, while the last child from the first marriage was still-born (the eleventh child). From the second marriage, only the fourth child died, and that when he was nine years old. The other children were all married and lived to be from 62 to 76 years old.

In a Kampen newspaper there was an article on June 9, 1960 entitled "The 125 year existence of the Reformed Congregation." This article stated that on June 4, 1835, Dirk Hoksbergen was ordained as a teaching elder, and three years later as minister. As far as I can determine, he

was ordained as an elder in 1835, and then as a teaching elder in 1838 -- then he also received the right to administer the sacraments.

He would not be called a minister, although some years later, in 1854 in any case, he did wear the current clothing for the office: a short jacket, and shoes with buckles and stitches. He did not wear those clothes every day, because he still lived in "De Oude Scheere." He wore his everyday clothes and wooden shoes to Kampen for catechism classes and home-visits. Various articles referred to him as the "Klompendominee" (wooden shoe minister) and the church was called the "Klunieskarke" (wooden shoe church).

He was known at the time to be a well-to-do farmer, because his absence for visitations in Kampen and participation in synods made it necessary for him to have hired help. His own children were still too young at that time to help out.

I have been unable to discover the reasons for his moving about.

His second wife, Aaltje Netjes, was born in a farmhouse in Kamperzeedijk (in the area which belongs to the Zwollerkerspel congregation). This house is still in the hands of the great-grandchildren.

In 1861, when Dirk had been living in Kampen for one year, the last child was born. Annigje, as we already mentioned, married the organ-builder, Jan Proper [at this point Scheltens briefly discusses some historical discrepancies concerning Proper and organs.]

When Dirk moved to Kampen in 1860, he lived on the Vloedijk opposite the church. For the purchase from the brewery (from whom the church building had been purchased) and the furnishing of the church, some congregation members had lent money. Twenty years later they still had not been paid back. Presumably these are

the members who could no longer find value in the preaching of Hoksbergen and so sought another pastor. They asked for their money back, but it wasn't there. They turned the matter over to the government authorities.

In the Kampen newspaper of February 6, 1870, you can read in the City section that the old Reformed church on the Burgwal was closed with a heavy chain. Undoubtedly all this deeply troubled Hoksbergen. Actually, at this point he was no longer a pastor, for he resigned his office on January 16, 1870.

In an old family Bible, the following is stated:

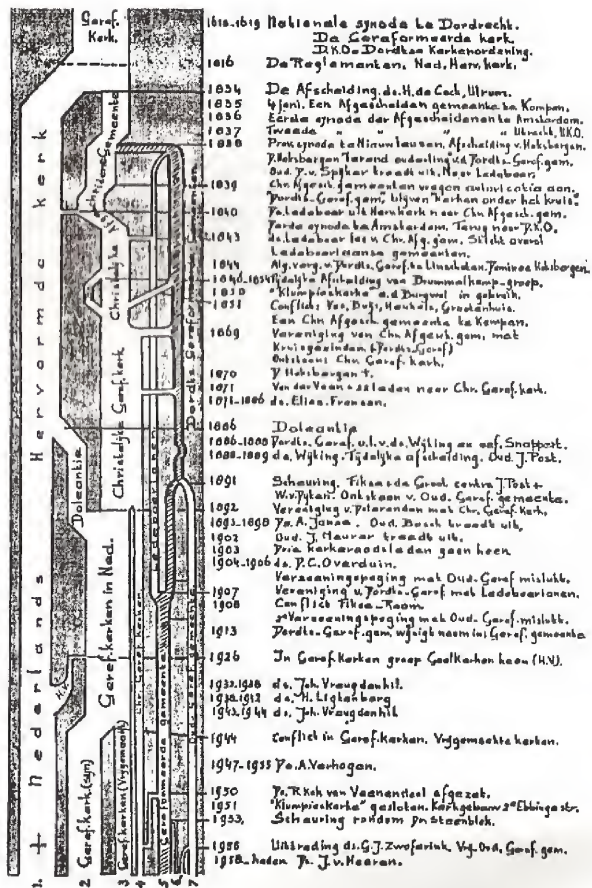
"Dirk Hoksbergen has on January 16 in the year 1870 left his office as teacher at Kampen and he spoke on Revelation 3:1-6. On January 30, 1870, he gave a farewell address based on Acts 20:28-32."

Fourteen days later, on February 19, he died, at around 5:00 in the afternoon. He was buried on February 23. Also in a Kampen newspaper of February 27, 1870, there was an obituary: "Died, D. Hoksbergen, 70 years old, the husband of Aaltje Netjes." Also here we note the mistake of the 70 years.

Five grandchildren of Dirk Hoksbergen are still living. Some live here in Kampen and others of his descendants live in Hasselt, Ommen and Heerde.

Noteworthy is the following: A younger brother of Dirk Hoksbergen, namely Gerrit, who was born on June 8, 1805, is the maternal great-grandfather of Prof. Dr. K. Schilder.

Timeline



1. Ned. Herv. kerk.

3 kerkgebouwen: Bovenkerk, Broederkerk, Noorderkerk.
5 predikanten : ds. J. L. Meesters.
 ds. J. van Malenstein.
 ds. J. Ewoldt.
 ds. A. H. Sonnenberg.
 ds. A. H. Nijkamp.

2. Geref. kerk (syn.).

2 kerkebouwen: Burgwalkerk (Burgwal 60).
Westerkerk (Wilhelminalaan 97).
3 predikanten : dr. D. van Swigchem.
ds. W. H. Melles.
ds. G. Brinkman.

3. Geref. kerk (Vrijgemaakt).

1 kerkgebouw : Nieuwe kerk, Broederweg 34.
5 predikanten : ds. C. H. Lindeboom.
 ds. G. Visee.
 ds. O. W. Bouwsma.
 ds. J. O. Mulder.
 ds. J. Vonkeman (Zuid-Afrika)

4. Chr. Geref. kerk.

1 kerkgebouw : Buiten-Nieuwstraat 67.
1 predikant : ds. S. van Zwoll.

5. Geref. Gemcente.

1 kerkgebouw : 2e Ebbingestraat 3.
1 predikant : ds. J. van Haaren.

6. Vrij-Oud-Geref. Gemeente,

1 kerkgebouw : Groenestraat 96.
1 predikant : ds. G. J. Zwoferink.

7. Oud-Gersf. Gemeente.

1 kerkgebouw : Burgwal 101 (Kalverhekkenbos).
geen predikant.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

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After 1795, several regulations were made by the State to make an end to the privileged position of the Reformed Churches. They were now equal with other Churches and religious societies. Louis Napoleon as well as his brother the Emperor, made attempts to call a new organization into life for the Reformed Churches. But this was not realized.

Shortly after his coronation, King William I, showed that he was interested in the Churches' well-being. In 1814 the State Council advised the government to appoint a commission, with the mandate to inform the King concerning the "most desirable church form."

The result of all this was that on January 7, 1816 there followed a royal approbation concerning the "General Rule for the Administration of the Reformed Churches in the Kingdom of the Netherlands."

The manner in which this document came into being, as well as the content, was subject to protests from several sides - for instance, from the many faithful confessors, who lived in the Veluwe and in the Rhine region (centre part of South Holland province) - but the leading persuasion in the Churches was a superficial Christianity.

They were subjected to a spirit of tolerance concerning deviations from doctrine, while ecclesiastical thinking was influenced by a rational-supra-naturalism.

Those who held to the "doctrine of Dordt" were diminishing; their number was small. With the doctrine of Dordt was meant maintaining everything that was taught by our godly fathers at the Synod of Dordt

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

1618/1619. They would abide by what was recorded in the confessional standards, the Three Forms of Unity, as they were called. Also concerning the organization of the Church, the Church Order of Dordt had to be maintained. Slowly but surely, within this group resistance grew against the introduction of the General Rule of 1816, and against the spirit of tolerance, which was prominent in the life of the Churches of that day.

As we already said, it was at the Veluwe where several of these "Dordt Reformed" people lived. A man from one of these Veluwe families, Dirk Hoksbergen, from Kampen played a very individual, nevertheless important role in the struggle that ensued against the introduction of the rules of 1816, and the spirit of that day, from which also these rules were born.

It was May 4, the year was 1800, that Beert Heyms Hoksbergen from Oldebroek was gladdened by the birth of a son, whom he named Dirk. The name of the boys' mother was Neeltje Beerts.

During his young years Dirk heard many things in his home about dissatisfaction in the Netherland Reformed Churches. He even heard tell of open protests, but initially much must have escaped him.

That changed when he grew into a man. Books from the old writers asked for his attention, mainly because many in his circle read and discussed these books.

Smytegelt, Comrie, but especially the writings of father Brakel were read, desired and honoured by the young man. But also other books, like the Institutes by Calvin he read and re-read, and before long he knew much of them by heart.

February 21, 1823, Hoksbergen married Matje Broekhuis. At that time he moved from Oldebroek to a neighborhood called Marle; and about 1831 he moved to Wilsum, that is to say, not to Wilsum itself, but to the

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

"polder" of Wilsum.

When one travels from Kampen to Wezep, there is, a little past the lumberyard of Cramer on the right hand side of the road, a farm called "Keulvoet" owned by Mr. Gunnink, the next farm is "De Oude Scheere" now occupied by the family Liefers. That was at one time the farm of Dirk Hoksbergen. From there, all he had to do was cross the IJssel river at the ferry of Wilsum to be in Wilsum, where he attended Church.

So this man was a farmer. But not an ignorant farmer. He was able to convincingly bring his convictions across, and was not ashamed of these convictions.

His convictions were not modestly tolerant, as the spirit of that day might suggest, but truly Reformed. He was intensely interested in what happened in his country and the world around him, but before all things he was a man of the Church and followed with great interest the struggles of Hendrick de Cock, the young minister of Ulrum, against those who maintained the organization which King William I had laid upon the Churches.

He gave careful attention to the conflict.

That is apparent from an encouraging letter, which Hoksbergen wrote to de Cock on Dec. 19, 1833, almost one year before Rev. de Cock seceded, but who was at that time already deposed from the ministry.

This letter of Hoksbergen was later published, with a foreword by de Cock; the title was, "Letter by D. Hoksbergen, about the present corrupted state of the Church and the degeneration of the Schools; sent to and published with a foreword by the Very Learned Rev. Mr. H. de Cock, Reformed (gereformeerd) Minister under the Cross" (onder 't Kruis).

The letter was signed as follows: Derk Hoksbergen, member of the Reformed (Gereformeerde) Church at Wilsum near Kampen.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

Much in this letter was about the schools and the upbringing of children.

Hear him admonish in his letter: "May the Lord save all of us that we do not bring forth children for Antichrist, the adversary of Christ, who even banned the doctrine of Christ from the schools; when with us our God-fearing ancestors taught our young children that according to Solomon they should be brought up in the ways of the Lord, and when old, they would not depart from it."

Education, estranged from the fear of the Lord hurt him deeply: "since they are engrafted in Christ, they dedicate their from-God-given children in baptism, and according to their oath and duty consecrate them to the Triune God; as for the present, they still swear that oath, but falsely, to mock God, for the doctrine of Christ is banned from the schools, and they swallow the fables of anti-christ which intoxicates them and confuses their head and understanding...."

Severe is his criticism of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. After first saying that the true Church can be found only where Christ gathers it, he calls out: "...how can you confuse the skeleton with the body? You will be scandalously deceived when you have sacrificed long enough to the idol of free will, that Baal."

A little further we read: "...our fathers had a saying, when you want to see the Pope you have to be in Rome; we don't have to go there anymore, for we can find him in our own backyard. What are these perjurers! Instead of Christians they are Antichrists, adversaries, to oppose those who remain faithful to the precepts and statutes of the Lord."

This farmer thinks only in biblical terms. For instance on page 14 we read, "No, God's children still hope that Nursing fathers of the Church will be born

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

from the house of Orange, and that Queens still shall be its Nursing mothers; even though His Majesty does not at the present time maintain the cause of his pious ancestors, the Lord is mighty to give into King's hearts to hate the beast, and that they will hate the spiritual harlot, for strong is the Lord Who judges her."

After reading all of the letter, we know much already about this farmer from Wilsum. De Cock was greatly pleased with the letter and wrote about Hoksbergen, "The wise and understanding do not see, yes they are blinder than moles, seeing light for darkness; while a simple farmer shows clearly the state of Church and school, based on God's eternal and infallible Word. Just read and see if any good thing can come from Nazareth, yes that God's Spirit is not confined to schools and Universities, "for so He gives His beloved sleep."

The letter contains 51 pages and makes him known as a farmer, who knows his Bible; even though at times his use of the Bible was not altogether appropriate when sketching a certain situation, or to establish his conviction.

In some places the meaning is not clear and his style is terrible. In something he wrote in 1838 he excuses himself as follows, "I am not a man who knows much about literature"; a little further, "In the field one does not learn about literature, like they do at the academy, of the God of this age."

But the main points which Hoksbergen wants to convey are clear, and what is important: his believing farmers' heart was moved when he wrote this letter.

We believe that this letter is the first public writing of Hoksbergen which reflects the Reformed view about the close relationship between Church and school. This farmer said at one time, "The schools are as corrupted as

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

the Churches; shall we refrain from attending Church, but send our children to the schools?"

We will cite one more lament of him, "Oh, may we belong to that few who bow the neck only under the yoke of Christ, and that we would not be led to and fro by all winds of doctrine; although we are compelled to sacrifice the children, the Lord gave us, to that MOLECH, may the Lord keep me and many of my Countrymen from this...."

"Bedurven s de karken" (Corrupted as the Churches), of this Hoksbergen is thoroughly convinced. He would have fully agreed with what Rev. Ramaker wrote one century later about his time, in his booklet, "The Principle of the Secession": "Pure truth was scarce in those days. The name of Christ was still named, but His Person and Work were not preached according to Scripture. They were satisfied with Christ as "Example", and thought Him to be sufficient for eternity, but they did not desire Him as the propitiation for their sins."

The Reformed heart of his farmer must have beat faster when he heard, how in the northern parts of the country, Rev. de Cock contended with the regulated Church and finally broke with it and seceded.

His happiness must have known no bounds, when midsummer 1835, this Rev. de Cock, coming from Genemuiden, visited him at his farm.

That very same evening a meeting was held by people who were not satisfied with the Church of that day. It is likely that at this time the Secession Congregation of Wilsum was formed and that elder(s) and deacon(s) were installed.

At 10:30 that night Hoksbergen accompanied Rev. de Cock on his way to Kampen, were they lodged with Roelof Nijhuis, a grocer in the Buiten-Nieuwstraat.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

The next day, Thursday, June 4, a Secession Congregation was instituted under the leadership of Rev. de Cock. It was a small group, altogether about 35 members.

Here too, elders were installed. Who and how many is not known. What is known is the fact that Hoksbergen was one of the elders. It is not known why he did not join the group in Wilsum, but became a member of the Secession Church of Kampen instead. It is a fact that Rev. de Cock impressed upon him the care for the Kampen flock. In this service some children were also baptized.

But in Kampen too, the Secession people were not tolerated by the government.

"Their rest would not be for long", we read in a historical oversight of the Reformed Congregation of Kampen by J. Janse. "When the Commissar of Police, C.F. Nehrkoker, heard what had happened, he appeared with a policeman, F.H. Wilt, at the home of Nijhuis and commanded Rev. de Cock to follow him to the police station at his home.

Having arrived at the station there ensued, in the presence of the mayor of the city Mr. F. Lemker, a heated dispute, whereby the Commissar told Rev. de Cock that his mind was confused.

As a matter of fact the Commissar was not sure what must be done with Rev. de Cock. For the day before this, when he had heard that Rev. de Cock was seen in the surroundings of Kampen, he had written for instructions to the Criminal Police in Zwolle. He did not know what better to do then request Nijhuis to take the pastor back in his house. However, fearing that de Cock would again gather friends around him, he was told to receive no more people, than a bylaw derived from Napoleon's time - and apparently still in power - which forbade receiving more than 20 people at a time.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

The police would take care that they would live up to it. The first few days this was the case. Rev. de Cock was kept busy writing letters of encouragement to his home and friends, in which this servant of the Lord admonished his people to rest in God's will, and not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together, even if Satan would cast some them in prison."

However, when far off friends heard that Rev. de Cock was again kept in custody being it in the home of a brother; many, among which candidate A. C. van Raalte, who was not yet admitted into the ministry came to visit. The mayor sent for the Commissar of Police and charged him to make an end of it. Again, that is, June 9, the Commissar went to the home of Nijhuis.

When he arrived he found not only the front-room, where Rev. de Cock was, but also the hall and another room filled with people. They were mainly friends from Zwolle, Zwartsluis, Genemuiden; yes, even from Drente and Gelderland, people had come. The Commissar was angry and told Rev. de Cock, he had not kept his promise.

He commanded Rev. de Cock to follow him to the police station. There was a room made ready for Rev. de Cock and dinner was served. That night, however, he was taken from the house of the Commissar and taken to hotel "De Bonte Os", and guarded by a police man, who told him that he would that night be transported to Zwolle.

(The latter indeed happened, but Rev. de Cock was let free, without being charged).

Soon, Hoksbergen had an important position in the just-instituted congregation. As "teaching elder", (this at the advice of Rev. de Cock) Sunday after Sunday he edified the congregation. At first by reading sermons of other

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

ministers, but after some time preaching himself. That is to say he made the sermons himself and recited them in the dialect of the district.

Truly, not a little matter for a farmer.

We fear that there was more with which we could find fault. When his style was the same as that of his letters, it must have influenced the "edification" of the congregation. But these sermons, poor in style, came from a believing heart, and it did not miss their purpose. The congregation grew and had close ties with their teaching elder.

The place where the Hoksbergen group met, the shop of carpenter Van Dijk in the Hofstraat, is mentioned. He used to be a busy man, but now he had little to do. However, he could still ply his trade, since every Monday he could begin with fixing doors and windows, that were on the previous Sunday broken down by the rabble from Kampen.

Soon, Dirk Hoksbergen became a man of prominence in the Churches. That became clear when in 1836 he is delegated to the first Synod of the Secession Churches in Amsterdam, as delegate for Overijsel.

Now we have come to the most important "Church" period in the life of Kampen's first elder.

We know quite a bit about him from the period 1836-1840.

They were eventful years in the young life of the Secession Church, years, in which the marks of a "youth crisis" were plainly visible.

Years of conflict, many difficulties, fierce persecution, fines and prison, inner discord, growing disunity, repeated clashes between incompatible characters, conservatism, synodacracy; in short: a continuing lack of a

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

healthy concept of the Church (kerkbesef).

In all these complications Hoksbergen is the first to be involved. He disputes, talks, writes and helps in making decisions. Herein he goes his own way and will not be pushed aside.

He wrestles to come to an appropriate church-life, and is not afraid to distance himself from others, if he thinks that is what the Lord requires. The early fathers are hereby his shining examples. What they wrote was to him as it were, the Word of God.

We want to write more about these important years.

There were sufficient reasons for the Seceders to gather in a general Synod. For they were bitterly persecuted.

The persecutions were the result of the fact that the government meant that the Seceders by seceding from the regulated Church, had placed themselves outside of the law, and so did not belong to the existing religions, which according to article 191 of the Constitution had a right to their protection.

The Seceders to the contrary maintained: "No, not we are a new Church, but the Reformed (state) Church is a new creation, which before this century did not exist. We became, by seceding, precisely what we used to be: the old Reformed Church."

Many petitions had gone to the King already, in which the Seceders asked for protection and freedom to meet.

It was Dec. 11, 1835, when the King answered these petitions. The King forbade all meetings of the Seceders. The King would grant protection on one condition, they had to accept the new regulations, order and peace must not be disturbed by them anymore; and they could not

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

desire any property of the Reformed Church.

It was impossible for the Seceders to comply with the demand. They did not see themselves as a danger to the state, and were of the opinion they had a right to be protected by the state. They were convinced that the King did not have the right information.

A joint petition, in which they gave exact utterance to their feelings, would bring the King to better considerations.

That is how the general Synod of the Secession Church met March 2, 1836, in Amsterdam. They met in a upstairs room in the home of the mother-in-law of Rev. Scholte, the widow Brandt, at the Lijnbaangracht. In front, on the wall of the house could be seen the words, "De Drie Fonteynen."

For ten days the Seceders met in deep secrecy. Present were 35 elders, along with the 35 year old Hoksbergen, five ministers and one candidate, van Raalte, who was called by the Churches of Genemuiden and Mastenbroek.

These ministers did not belong to the older generation. The moderator, Rev. Scholte was 31; Rev. de Cock, (seccr.) was 35 years old. The others were all below thirty. All of them "beardless youth."

Much was done in that upstairs room of the house, "De Drie Fonteynen." Elder Hoksbergen participated in all the discussions.

When the case of Rev. J. van Rhee, (who had sinned against the seventh commandment) was dealt with Hoksbergen was one of the members of the committee. This committee was united in its advise that the Rev. should be cut off.

A solid petition was drafted to be presented to the King in person. This petition consisted of no less than 30 printed pages. It shows that much work was done in few

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

days.

They also thought it necessary to have a catechism book for young children, which at the same time could be used as a manual for young children who began their schooling. A committee was appointed to write the same. The committee consisted beside Rev. Scholte and Rev. van Velzen of our elder Hoksbergen. From this it appears that of all the elders present, Kampen's elder was considered to be the most able person for this work. A great honour for "Oom Dirk" as Hoksbergen was popularly called.

When they later deal with the so-called "Oefenaars" (teaching elders), he is again appointed in a committee with an elder from Assen and Rev. H. de Cock. It is typical of the spirit of that Synod that those who were exponents of "Oefenaars" were appointed to this committee, to bring out a report concerning this matter. This was exactly the very thing Hoksbergen was looking for. We can be sure that he defended his view with much fervor. It is certain that it was mainly the work of Hoksbergen that art. 2 of the report read as follows: "To the end (n.l. edifying the assembly) that everyone shall confer his gifts to profit the congregation, be it in reading of God's Law and Word, or a sermon of an orthodox minister of the gospel; or when there may be the ability by one of the members, and after the desire of the congregation, to simply and ably expound and apply the Word, such a one shall deem himself guilty when he does not use this gift to the edification of the congregation."

We will show, how Hoksbergen used this very article to justify his position in Kampen as teaching elder.

Without objection we can accept that Hoksbergen agreed with the typical reformed decree about the so-called "feast days", for here he looked back to the same decree of the "Fathers of Dordt", whom he almost idolized; that decree reads as follows:

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

"Since Holy Scripture admonishes believers as strongly to stand in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, as attending to the divine ordinances, so shall the congregation of Christ be careful not to oblige the people, besides hallowing the day of the Lord, to celebrate the so-called Feast-days which the Lord has not ordained in His Word. The day of the Lord is hallowed by the Lord Himself, and we may by human decree not add other feast-days. The Lord gave us six working days to labour therein; we may assemble on those days, to be edified from the Word, as long as we do not bind man's conscience to keeping these by man decreed annual feast-days; in this the conscience must be wholly let free."

When Synod adjourned and the acts were written, they were examined by a committee of four: 2 ministers and 2 elders, one of whom was Dirk Hoksbergen. By now we have sufficiently established how important a role was played by Hoksbergen in the early days of the Church of the Secession.

Hoksbergen returned safely from his trip to Amsterdam. He was much honored by those at Synod. But he was not satisfied. He was keenly aware of tensions at Synod, that had not been cleared out of the way.

Right from the beginning Hoksbergen was aware of the controversy that grew between de Cock and Scholte. Carefully he followed the course of things as they developed.

He did not think very highly of Rev. Scholte. He did not trust him because of his principles on canon law, rather than the lack of principle on any Church Order. He was aware that Scholte did not in everything follow the Fathers of Dordt. Hoksbergen did not like that.

Many questions disturbed the Secession Churches. Questions like: What is the Church? Whose children

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

may be baptized? What is the meaning of the words: "Sanctified in Christ?", and there were others. In all these questions de Cock did not agree with Scholte and Hoksbergen always took the side of the former.

Tensions in the Churches were of such a nature that there was sufficient reason to call for another Synod to meet the following year. That took place in Utrecht in 1837.

They were especially disturbed about an intended change in the Church Order of Dordt. Hoksbergen knew that in Amsterdam they decided to remain with the Church Order of Dordt, because that was the historical line. But soon after Synod, Scholte attempted to get rid of this Church Order. According to him it was obsolete.

Assisted by F. v. Gezelle Meerburg, Rev. Scholte, at that Synod began to plead for a Church Order which would contain only general rules of conduct and leave more liberty for Churches and people.

They listened to Scholte and some provincial Synods accepted a 'Scholtian' Church Order and it was sent to several Churches in the country.

The Churches in the North and Eastern part of the country were indignant about this highhanded action.

Among these indignant people we find elder Hoksbergen of Kampen, he is one of the most resentful. He read the new Church Order from Scholte and noticed that this Church Order had removed everything that pointed toward any influence by the government in Church matters. This striving by Scholte irritates Hoksbergen. Ultra-conservative farmer that he is, he swears by what the fathers said and did.

"With the fathers" he writes somewhere, "I will maintain the confession, that in religious matters, the government has a voice in making a final decision." Hoksbergen will not hear that the fathers are accused of

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

"wrong practices and ignorance."

Briefly and concisely he says at some occasion, that in order to follow the fathers, he has a desire "to crawl behind them from a long distance." He dares not to "break their work, fearing that God's judgments shall be upon him."

With awe Hoksbergen thinks back to the so called famous Synod of Dordt. He does not understand that Dordt's fame rests in the power of the Government and the imagination of posterity. Exactly that strong arm of the government did more harm than good to that Synod. But as far as Hoksbergen was concerned that analysis compares with lèse-majesté.

He is completely serious. As the only delegate he travels from Overijsel, to Utrecht, fully decided to defend his views against Scholte.

The Provincial Synod gave him instructions. He knew them all by heart. "...we had from Groningen, Drente, Overijsel and Gelderland, of the delegates from Utrecht, a mandate to maintain the Synod of Dordt with its Church Order without any changes...."

Let us realize the situation as it truly was. Synod met when the persecution was at its most fierce. Almost all the members of Synod that assembled at Utrecht were witness of insult and scorn, of oppression and persecution they repeatedly endured. They knew about the great fines that had to be paid by many, and of the weeks, even months, they had been in dirty prisons. Even during this Synod they were subject to oppression. There were 24 people attending Synod; that was four too many. For the same old law, made by Napoleon, which said that a political meeting could not consist of more than 20 persons.

That law was applied to the Church meeting in Utrecht. No doubt they needed courage and self-denial to attend this meeting as delegates. Night and day, a guard

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

with his rifle was posted at the entrance of the building to keep out any above the number of twenty.

Yet, all 24 members came inside. Via hidden back alleys, the 'extra' delegates were able to enter.

In order not to be refused admittance by the guard when they went outside the building, they decided to stay inside all the time that Synod met. That is how the brethren stayed together for 14 days and 14 nights. They ate, drank and slept together in the same rooms where they assembled. Every night they knelt and prayed together. They did the same when they rose in the morning. They also knelt for prayer when they opened and closed their meetings.

To read this, one would think that the delegates to Synod dealt in the best harmony with the matters of the Church.

But this was not the truth.

In 1861 Hoksbergen told us how it went at times.

"In Utrecht they gathered for three weeks about the articles of Church Order of the Synod of Dordt, and other rules. One morning I found my brother H. de Cock weeping in a room by himself. He had become so discouraged among these Ca-iaphasses, and it was so difficult because of the conflict, that it seemed they did not need any heat, in spite of the fact it was winter, and cold outside. I had to comfort him, knowing "that this light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Some said, it was as if the devil walked through that room."

A sorry sight as we can see. The fierce persecution from the outside was at times not sufficient to prevent the delegates to face each other as enemies.

To really understand Hoksbergen's behaviour during

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

and after Synod, a couple of remarkable facts must be mentioned.

The moderator of this Synod, Rev. van Velzen, of whom it was said that he was not free of ambiguity, was inclined to quarrel and be ambitious. Rev. Scholte was clerk of Synod. These two who would later be adversaries, appeared to be of one heart and one mind at this Synod.

It was also a peculiar fact that all delegates were compelled to sign a document, only valid for this Synod, wherein each promised "not to hold any human writings, but only God's Word for certain and as undoubted rule of faith and practice." And "that in all these meetings none shall have intentions other than God's honor, peace of the Church and especially to abide by the purity of doctrine."

In spite of all these good words, Hoksbergen experienced that exactly this Synod made a human writing into a rule of faith and bound the Churches to it.

He saw the peace in the Church disturbed because Synod had compromised doctrine.

With growing indignation Hoksbergen saw that instead of the old Church Order, a new Church Order (in fact a fourth Form of Unity) was forced upon the Churches.

Passionate is Rev. de Cock's protest against all these "novelties." Hoksbergen, and with him four more elders, courageously attempted to stem the tide. But to no avail. The new Church Order was accepted and the fourth Form of Unity contained therein became "law in the Church."

When Synod obliged the Churches from now on not to choose office bearers for two years, but that from now on office bearers must be considered to be "chosen for life", Hoksbergen was once again on the side of Rev. de Cock, who could not accept this "law" either.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

During this Synod, his "friend and brother" Rev. de Cock stood more or less in the place of a person who was suspect. Because of the fact that Hoksbergen was at all times unconditionally on his side, we understand why he was not chosen to any of the committees during this Synod. He was not counted worthy of much honour here. For instance, only once was he asked, to close a certain meeting with thanksgiving. This happened after a passionate discussion, about the introduction of the new C.O., but which turned into a failure.

Before he prayed, he requested the meeting to sing from Psalm 119 the words taken from the verses 133, "Order my steps in thy word", and 134, "Deliver me from the oppression of man!" And from verse 136, "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law."

This reflects concisely the situation in which Hoksbergen found himself.

The Acts of this Synod appeared later, it was furnished with a foreword by the moderator Rev. van Velzen.

Again, it is typical of the situation that Rev. Scholte refused to co-sign the foreword. He thinks it went too far, as will be understood from the following citations:

"There are people who desire the old because it is old, others long for the new, because they like change: both will not find pleasure in the decisions and stipulations of Synod, both also lack the mark of the true scribe:

"At this time everyone is duty bound to submit to the new Church Order. When someone departs from this he would do a great evil...."

"Some could also rise up, and with flattering words deceive the congregation, cause schism, and make them rise up against the servants, sent by God. But as KORAH, DATHAN and ABIRAM with all their adherents experienced the plagues of the Almighty, so would all those that

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

trouble the Congregation take upon themselves the wrath of God. Let everyone be warned."

With this Hoksbergen and his friends were sent home!

It will be understood that by these Synodical decisions the brethren became divided.

Saddened, indignant and angry, Rev. de Cock, Hoksbergen and others, returned home. They traveled together and must have discussed many things.

They were saddened because of the split in the Churches, about much disunity between the brothers at Synod; and indignant that the majority dared to "move the old landmarks" by writing a brand new Church Order.

They were especially angered by the doctrinal content of this fourth Form.

Rev. de Cock adjured the brethren not to give in, and not to grow weak in resisting the new Church Order. In Zwolle they parted ways and said good bye. Hoksbergen went to Kampen, de Cock continued to travel North.

When he came home he received one surprise after another. His wife had a visitor, Rev. van Raalte. Van Raalte, afraid for a split in the Churches, had discussed the matter with Frouw Venema, de Cock's wife, and together they would attempt to show de Cock that the differences were not as great as he considered them to be! Much of the differences could be brought back to misunderstanding and the Cock must not be so suspicious! It is almost inconceivable, but de Cock became convinced.

"Then he laid", Hoksbergen wrote later, "his head in Delilah's lap!."

Together, de Cock and van Raalte, visited the

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

Churches in the Northern part of the country and persuaded them to accept the new Church Order, and they succeeded.

They also wrote a letter to the brethren in Overijsel, but they suspected that they would not accept de Cock's turn-about without conflict and they were right, especially in as far as Hoksbergen was concerned.

They were right in their suspicion about Hoksbergen. Whoever knew the position of Hoksbergen, could not be wrong about his reaction.

From several writings from Hoksbergen we receive the impression that he saw many things about the Church Order in a sound biblical way. However, about certain things he was very determined. Concerning some of these matters his position was quite subjective. He could be counted among the people who thought highly of the 'experiential' life. Hoksbergen meant with that: the work of God in the hearts of believers. Of which he said, that work of God in the heart agrees with the Word of God.

Certainly, Hoksbergen acknowledged that the Word of God was more than inner experiences. But when he has difficulty to refute with Scripture, things he does not like, he uses indirect reasoning, by saying, "when the inner man is against it, is that from the Holy Spirit, and ALSO according to Scripture. And what is refuted by the inner experience, is also in conflict with Scripture."

In Utrecht, Hoksbergen experienced that they had used but few arguments from the Bible to convince the delegates that the new Church Order should be accepted. Hoksbergen too, did not have Scriptural arguments to his disposal, but he reasoned: For myself I feel that this is wrong. That is of the Holy Spirit, and so the urge and need to resist this is from the Lord. God's Word in me urges me to resist.

On top of that were his conservative ideas.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

For many years, with others, he resisted these 'novelties'. After the secession he declared repeatedly that in all things he wanted to abide by the doctrine, the discipline and the service of the Fathers of Dordt. Even though he knew not all that much about church government, personally he felt that the decisions taken in Utrecht were treason to the good cause. Furthermore, Hoksbergen did not at all like the power of the so-called higher assemblies (meerdere vergaderingen). Delegates to Synod he called "servants", he meant that they were sent, with a mandate, by the local Church. That is why he did not like to accept decisions of Synod as binding.

The final decision should rest with consistory. Consistory had to look to it whether the 'servants' had quit themselves of their mandate in a responsible manner. And he was thoroughly convinced that as a servant he kept his mandate when he was sent to the provincial Synod of Overijsel. The others who had changed their views, committed breach of promise, but not him. He was solidly convinced of that.

Our elder from Kampen refused to accept the new Church Order, for he would not be bullied by "young teachers with the allures of bishops!" as he said. It must be understood that he did not go along with de Cock when he made the turn about, and he could not accept that the Northern provinces had changed their minds.

Rev. de Cock - knowing Hoksbergen very well - attempted everything to prevent a split. However, a discussion at Zwolle did not solve anything.

It was Nov. 18, 1837 when a provincial meeting was held at Nieuwleusen, near Dalfsen.

Rev. de Cock had written a personal letter and in that letter Rev. de Cock confessed that by being suspicious he was led astray.

He calls unto the brethren to be one, and asks of

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

them to give up their resistance to the new Church Order, for, he wrote, "the suspicion I had was unfounded."

It must have been a difficult meeting.

Rev. van Raalte and Rev. Brummelkamp did what they could to show the innocence of the Utrecht Church Order. But the Hoksbergen faction remained adamant and protested fiercely against the course things had taken. "With great intensity" they accused Synod that by changing the Church Order of Dordt they had left the foundation of the Secession. The meeting miscarried.

"With hot tempers and passion" the accusations were piled up, and "with unseemly poor conduct", they failed to bring the passionate minds to rest and receive instruction."

Disappointed, and with nothing to show for their pains, they returned home.

However, after the meeting, both parties continued the battle. Hoksbergen would never give in; on the other hand, his adversary, Rev. van Raalte, pastor of Genemuiden and Mastenbroek, will not quit in his attempts to have the Churches of Overijsel accept the new Church Order. That is how he went to Kampen to hunt among Hoksbergen's sheep. Several times he came here - without the knowledge of consistory - to influence the members to bow their head for the new Church Order, and if necessary, distance themselves from Hoksbergen. The result is that Hoksbergen becomes more obstinate all the time. A "kiend" (child) like van Raalte will come here to tell him - behind his back - what he must do!

He felt himself responsible before the Lord, he must watch over the sheep and supervise the Teachers that will introduce strange and new things.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

That is how consistory of Kampen decided to "catch the little foxes that spoil the vine" in good time, and determined that van Raalte could not preach or administer the sacraments in their Church anymore.

Rev. van Raalte had expected this. For that matter, he had determined already, not to preach in Churches that would not accept the new Church Order.

For the Church of Kampen this meant that there was no one to administer the sacraments.

Hoksbergen had hoped that Rev. de Cock would be available, but he disappointed him. He wrote to Hoksbergen that "while this would lead to quarreling with other ministers, he could not any longer administer the sacraments in Kampen's Church."

From a letter written by Hoksbergen it appears that Rev. van Raalte was not at all times consistent, but manipulated the situation with the new Church Order whenever it served his purpose.

Rev. van Raalte compelled some congregations to accept the Church Order, if not he would not baptize their children. He told other congregations where he was not allowed to preach, "you don't have to accept the articles." The office bearers of the Congregation Christi in Hasselt will give witness to the truth, that the Rev. preached and baptized in their Churches, without them having accepted the Church Order."

If this, what Hoksbergen states here, is no insinuation but truth, we can imagine that it did not endear Rev. van Raalte to a man like Hoksbergen, who would stick to his own meaning right unto the bitter end.

That is how the year 1838 began. This would be the most difficult year in the life of Kampen's first elder.

At this time neither Rev. van Raalte nor Rev. de Cock did administer the sacraments. It looked as if the Kampen

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

congregation would be without the "seals of God's Covenant" for a long time.

But this did not bother Hoksbergen for long.

Was he not a teaching elder, installed into the office by no one less than Rev. de Cock? Did the latter not solemnly urge him to take heed of the flock in Kampen?

To be sure, Hoksbergen knew that the old Church Order of Dordt did not approve, but the situation in Kampen was now an emergency (and according to him, this was not his fault), and now the Church Order of Dordt, at this point, should be left for what it was. After his inner conviction, he was responsible for the flock, and when this required that he had to administer the sacraments, that inner conviction, as being God's Word, must be accepted by the congregation!

If at this point, we must believe his later adversary, elder Vos, who said that one Sunday morning in early 1838, Hoksbergen suggested "with a weeping voice" that someone must be chosen from their midst, who would baptize the children and administer the Lord's Supper. It was said that he called out, "Why don't you choose such a man. There are already four children that have to be baptized. They may not remain unbaptized any longer. If need be, choose a man who has not the gift of the word. In that case I will still bring the Word. But we may not continue like this."

There was some resistance to his proposal, especially from his co-elder D. van Spijker and four or five members of the congregation.

But the majority, not strong in doctrine, much less they knew of the articles of the Church Order, saw the situation in which they found themselves as an emergency, and had an almost unlimited trust in their leader. The matter advanced and it goes without saying that Hoksbergen was chosen. Elder van Spijker and some oth-

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

ers did not agree with the procedure and left the Congregation. They later joined the group of Rev. Ledeboer.

This is how Hoksbergen in fact became the minister of Kampen, even though he did not want the title, and said that he was only "teaching elder." The Sunday after, he baptized four children, one of his own children among them.

These - according to the Church Order of Dordt - illegal administrations of the sacrament of baptism caused considerable commotion. In a letter to Rev. de Cock, Hoksbergen announced his decision and Rev. de Cock reacted immediately.

"With a sad heart I read the letter of Hoksbergen", he begins his answer. Hoksbergen is much admonished: this high-handed performance breaks all order in the Church. The judgment and calling (of a servant) must be left to "mutual overseers of the Church." Without these no one can be a lawful Minister of the Word." Let go of these strange Concepts and return with recantation of the wrong to the by the Lord established order!

Hoksbergen had a ready answer. Rev. de Cock wrote him a letter of six pages, he answered with one of twenty pages. Did the Cock accuse him of dealing disorderly, with several examples he attempted to show that de Cock, and the other ministers, did not do any better. "You call my performance disorderly; and though the other ministers would like to get rid of me, I cannot help it. I know they would like to cast that muddy and troublesome stone out of Zion, to be able to build the Temple, after the likeness of a man, and not as the Lord showed on the mountain."

Except this remarkable appeal to the Bible, he also cites father Brakel. As concerning the Seceders, "It is no

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

trouble to show you that they left the ways of the Fathers";

"It was not in vein that our WISE and PIOUS forefathers at the illustrious and famous Synod of Dordt, knowing that some spirits sick for change would at some time corrupt the Church by introducing hymns into the Church; however, our age which deems the wisdom of our fathers foolishness, and self-conceitedly attempts to renew and change everything, has left the council of the ancients with Rehoboam, and also in this followed their own desire and will. But surely with no better result than this UNWISE SON of Solomon: for alas, we see the Congregation of the Lord divided and rent, feelings run high, edifying decreased and God's true worship, on which depends all our salvation, flouted.

"That is how I venerated and still venerate our wise and pious fathers; and I think about the Utrecht novelty seekers, as Rev. de Cock about those against whom he warned in 1834; but truth remains truth, even though people change, who wrote truth.

"Oh, Rev. de Cock, would the Lord give you eyes to see, you would not any longer draw the sword against us and yourself!"

The way the letter ends is also typical of him:

"I still have the desire with you, in all simplicity of heart, to look into these matters by the light of God's Word. I will still receive you as a brother, you still have a place with me, even though it is between you and me as with David and Uriah.

"In the mean time I wish with all my heart that the old relationship would be like in days past; which I desire back, but only after the council of Solomon (Prov. 22: 28) "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set."

And yet, to read all of the letter, we must marvel

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

about the knowledge of Scripture and the courageous language with which this farmer and grower of Zalker potatoes, defends his views and protects the office he received.

But the commotion remained.

It was June 9, 1838 that the Churches met as classis at Mastenbroek. Rev. de Cock himself was present and was the moderator.

As was expected, the illegal dealings of Hoksbergen were discussed. Rev. de Cock suggested at the meeting to compare the articles of the Church Order of Dordt with those of the Utrecht Church Order.

Some liked to leave the matter rest, but the majority agreed. But not much was gained!

Every change was resisted. When they came to article four, Hoksbergen and his friends protested vehemently against the detailed stipulations concerning the calling to the ministry, which had been put in its place.

Only then the battle was on in earnest.

De Cock accused Hoksbergen and his co-elder, and demanded that they should confess guilt. They in turn demonstrated that the Utrecht Church Order was the basis of all their problems, and they demanded of classis to reject the new Church Order.

But Rev. de Cock was not planning to submit to the meaning of the brethren. He deemed it of the evil one that a lesser assembly should reject the decisions of a higher assembly. One or more members should not rise up against the whole body!

That was the difficulty. The opposition did not want to acknowledge the authority of the higher assembly (meerdere vergadering). They declared openly that the moderator would be of use when with word and deed he would show they had to reject the new Church Order.

But de Cock did not give up. Rightly so, several arti-

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

cles of the Church Order of Dordt had been violated, and he could prove that.

Seriously and boldly he reprimanded Hoksbergen and adherents, but the majority of the meeting did not agree. They judged there was no question of any misdemeanor in Kampen.

Under tears one of the brethren admonished Rev. de Cock not to continue on this way "which disturbs God's people and split the Congregations."

Alas, they did not come to an agreement. When they left the meeting the minds were even more impassioned than when they came together.

How tense must have been the atmosphere when after nine days they met again at Nieuwleusen. (June 18, 1838).

Both pastors, Rev. de Cock and van Raalte indeed contributed to the tense atmosphere. For right after the failed classis meeting at Mastenbroek they traveled to all the Overijssel Churches to prepare them for the upcoming provincial meeting at Nieuwleusen. A church split was pending!

That both pastors went to see all the Churches was the logical result of their view concerning ecclesiastical law.

As a matter of fact, they did not acknowledge the autonomy of the local Church, like Hoksbergen. They viewed the Secession Church as the large national Church, of which the local Church formed a kind of division. De Cock and van Raalte saw themselves more or less as leaders of all the Churches, thence the fact that de Cock was moderator at Mastenbroek. To them there was nothing illegal about their contact with the Churches before the provincial meeting. Hoksbergen from his side could see little else but "the allures of bishops" in such behaviour.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

When the delegates met at the provincial meeting at Nieuwleusen, de Cock was again appointed to be its moderator. By reading of the minutes the matter was right away sharply defined. For via the minutes Hoksbergen and company were accused of:

- a. rejecting of order in the Church.
- b. seducing faithful Teachers.
- c. the unlawful exercise of the office of Minister of the Word.

Rev. van Velzen who also was present at this meeting attempted to bring his theories about ecclesiastical law before them, but to no avail.

Hoksbergen and his colleague from Zwolle defended themselves fervently, but the outcome resulted in a "disorderly quarrel."

Rev. de Cock made an end of it, and asked the meeting the question if Hoksbergen and company were to be punished; when the majority answered in the affirmative, he urged them to confess guilt.

After this, Schouwenburg from Zwolle, read a sort of "act of Secession." Delegates from Kampen (Hoksbergen), Zalk, Deventer, Mastenbroek and Rouveen declared their agreement, and together they left the meeting. Those who were left decided to suspend the "schismatics" from their office, and by persevering in their evil ways, declare them deposed from their office.

And as it happens more often at Synods, they began with doctrinal questions (example, infant baptism) and ended with a question of order.

It goes almost without saying that Hoksbergen and company were made out to be schismatics, but of course they could not agree.

In his brochure directed against his former brother elder G. Vos, Hoksbergen wrote concerning this point:

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

"... now he calls those Separatist, who protested against changing the Church Order G. Vos must convey this word to himself or the Christian Seceders, who separated from the Synod of Dordt, and made for themselves new rules and statutes, with five new articles, at Utrecht...."

In another place he wrote, "Those who were with me at the Synod of Utrecht, and will witness to the truth, know how low most Pastors thought of the Fathers; this has many a time brought new wounds inside of me."

He could have written the same about the meeting of Nieuwleusen. Wounded into the depths of his soul he traveled back to Kampen. He had experienced something of church politics. He was of the opinion that he saw things more in the line of Scripture than those who suspended him! Years later he spoke bitterly about the fact that van Velzen on his way from Nieuwleusen had made the remark, "that the new regulations would be accepted, even if they would lose a whole province."

But his trials still had not come to an end. Ten days later - June 28, 1838 - he met in Zwolle with other delegates of the protesting congregations from Zwolle, Deventer, Kampen, Hasselt, Zalk, Rouveen, Mastenbroek, Woerden, Linschoten and Hattem, at the home of Carel Tobias from Ommen. We read in "Kruisdominees" page 30:

"First of all, those gathered together took care of a republication of the Church Order of Dordt. They want to show therewith "that those who are Reformed by the grace of God, have not the least need for novelties," and they cannot unite with those who depart from the paths of the Fathers of Dordt." Therefore they accept "the C.O of Dordt wholly and unchanged, although it is impossible at the present time to abide by some of its articles, while the Church is under the cross."

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

They also discussed the administration of the sacraments.

Hoksbergen suggested that a local congregation should first of all choose someone from its midst or from the outside to administer the sacraments. That was the crucial point for Hoksbergen: the calling by a certain (local) Congregation. That is what he believed about "sending" or "ordination." Only two delegates supported this motion. The others were against, some impassionately.

They were united about the Church Order of Dordt, but the delegates quarreled about this question. Passionate arguments and disagreements were the result. "Fervently quarreling and disunited", they separated.

The situation remained very confused. Hoksbergen saw it coming: the best thing for him and his Congregation, would be to quietly retire, and try here in Kampen to maintain fellowship with each other. For all these ecclesiastical assemblies produced only dispute and discord. His believing farmers heart abhorred these things.

He is very much "perturbed" when he considers the disunity among the brethren. He became still more convinced when he learned that the "turn about" Rev. van Raalte had attempted, in the fall of 1838 at a classis meeting, to do away with the new Church Order and return to the C.O of Dordt, "for the benefit of the deposed congregations" and to the satisfaction and unity of their (own) perturbed congregations.

However, classis unanimously refused, and declared the performance of Hoksbergen to be from the evil one and arising from lawlessness.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

That is how the eventful year of 1838 ended for Hoksbergen. What would the new year bring? Soon he would know. He was convinced he saw the approach of a second disaster for the Secession Churches.

From the beginning of the Secession (1834) these Churches wanted to be recognized as true Reformed Churches. "We cannot forsake, what Your Majesty demands from us in the first place, that we are Reformed..." is how reads a "Humble Petition" from Rev. de Cock to King William I.

The name "Reformed" was to them a confession. The Seceders were convinced to be the true continuation of the Churches of the great Reformation. It was precisely for that confession they were persecuted and oppressed.

Oppression and persecution would cease as soon as they were prepared to accept a different name and forsake all historical rights.

For five years they persevered in this. Then they capitulated. December 1838, the Congregation of Utrecht, under the leadership of Rev. Scholte requested freedom of assembly. They presented themselves under a different name: Christian Secession Congregation and introduced to the government a (Huishoudelijk Reglement?) In fact they now denied the principle of being the continuation of the old Reformed Church.

At first the brethren were highly indignant about this act, but before long Rev. de Cock, Brummelkamp and van Velzen followed Rev. Scholte.

Hoksbergen understood that the rift between him and Rev. de Cock was greater than ever before, and doubted if ever they would and could see eye to eye again. He is now determined to hold on to the name "Reformed Congregation Under The Cross", the name de Cock had used after he was deposed.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

That name was indeed in agreement with that of the Reformed Churches of the 16th Century. Then they were called by that name because of the persecution. Hoksbergen would rather be ill treated, then ever agreeing with requesting freedom, at conditions that would make his congregation appear as a new sect.

With the year 1840 new turbulences came to disturb the young Secession Churches.

The Seceders were looking forward to another Synod that was to be held in Amsterdam.

Several months before the occasion Hoksbergen had received a letter from Rev. de Cock. This letter was written at the insistence of the Provincial meetings of Groningen and Drente and contained an "Exhortation" to the "brethren who live in discord with or in the Church", with the request to bring their objections to Synod in writing, that an attempt may be made to find a solution to the differences. Rev. de Cock frankly admitted that by introducing the Utrecht C.O., many difficulties had emerged, and that by "wrongly applied church-discipline", the Churches had become divided.

They would like to discuss this "peace-offer" of de Cock. That is why many delegates traveled to the home of Jochem Kok, an elder at Mastenbroek, where these and other matters would be discussed.

Alas, the answer of the "Dordt Reformed" was not reconciliatory. They demanded a true confession of guilt. First they must ask these brothers that were so wrongly dealt with for forgiveness. Above that, they were not in need of returning, but the Secession brothers must return to them. One of the demands they made, was that those "who made themselves guilty of denying the name "Reformed" and giving away the goods and rights of the Reformed Church, must recant before the authorities and

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

desire them back."

This far they did agree.

But there arose great difficulties about a different matter. They made use of the occasion to come to a more consolidated church-life.

Seeing that not one of the Ministers of the Seceders had joined the group, the question of preaching and the administration of the sacraments was pressing.

What could be done about this?

A number of delegates, among which Hoksbergen, was of the opinion that the congregations had the right to call a pastor from their own number or from elsewhere, to preach and administer the sacraments.

Others, to the contrary, were of the opinion that the meeting as it was called together, grant written authorization to five "preaching elders" to serve as servants of Christ for His Church under the Cross, and proclaim God's Word and administer the seals of the Covenant.

The latter were in the majority.

Hoksbergen was more than disappointed. He felt nothing for a minister in general service, who was not first chosen by a certain Congregation. This was basic to the legality of the office, and he would hold on to that.

When they became aware that this principle was not adhered to anymore, Hoksbergen and his friends gathered their papers and left the meeting. It was for him, however, very difficult to see that his co-elder G.Vos did not agree with him on this point, and since that time they were friends no more.

After the departure of Hoksbergen and company the meeting accepted the contested article. Seeing there was

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

no more time to ordain the five appointed "preaching elders", they decided to do that next Sunday at Zwolle. The ordination indeed took place, but with a view to the secretive and disorderly performance of the "office-bearers" diverse conflicts were the result. When two of these take refuge to Hoksbergen for help and comfort, he will not be reconciled. When they met at Mastenbroek the brethren did not take him seriously; subsequently the brethren must now bear the consequences of their own deeds. He sends them to elder Vos, who was their friend at Mastenbroek...

From now on Hoksbergen looked for strength in complete isolation. He was finished with all these ecclesiastical meetings. It appears later, that there was yet a meeting in Kampen of the "Dordt Reformed", where Hoksbergen was present and was acknowledged as "teaching elder." But from then on the Churches do not work together anymore.

It is possible that he was present at the general meeting in Linschoten, that was held July 4 and 5, 1844.

If indeed he signed the form at that time, he was since then acknowledged as pastor. In an old year-book of the Ref. (Geref.) Churches I found an item declaring, "elder Hoksbergen oefenaar (teaching elder), June 5, 1844 - Feb. 6, 1870 minister." This would make it seem likely that he attended the meeting at Linschoten. Other sources to the contrary make mention of the fact that at the general meeting in Linschoten he was admonished, because he did not work with the brethren. The latter is more likely the way it was. It appears in all likelihood that Hoksbergen since 1840 went his own way, all by himself. After that we don't hear much of Hoksbergen anymore. Only once in a while his name is mentioned.

As for instance in 1850 when there were "terrible

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

quarrels" that took place in his Church.

It seems that the Hoksbergen group originally met in the Hofstraat, possibly in the carpenter shop of van Dijk. But in 1850, the pastor as we may now call Hoksbergen requested financial support from the government for a church building. This request was denied, but the congregation brought enough money together to buy a brewery on the Burgwal for 810 guilders. That building was renovated into a place for the congregation to meet. It is the well-known "Klumpies kärke" (wooden shoe church).

It must have been very satisfying for Hoksbergen to possess their own church building, but his joy was short-lived because of a violent quarrel in the congregation, in which he himself was closely involved.

It is not clear what precisely was the cause of the violent quarrel in Hoksbergen's Congregation.

In his memoirs, Rev. Schouten suggests that some of the members would not live in isolation any longer and wanted to return to the fellowship of the Seceders. Prof. Brummelkamp, in his memoirs, suggests the problem originated around Hoksbergen's attire. Originally he stood in the pulpit in the Overijssel farmers' apparel, the short shirt with the many buttons. However, later he appeared in the official attire of the minister of that day: "steek" (three cornered hat), "bef" (front of robe), and short breeches. Some of the members did not like that and this gave much cause for division.

Hoksbergen himself writes about this the following: "...there was a congregational meeting about material matters, not about my person; trouble arose, which caused bitterness among the people. I could not agree with either side, that was impossible. Seven members brought in an accusation against me, among which was criticism about a sermon on 2 Tim 2: 19, in which I expounded the doctrine of election. Those seven asked

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

me if I was supposed to deal with that in the pulpit; I answered in the affirmative, but the congregation was not there that night. Then at an evening with the congregation present they decided about the problem. The congregation did not agree with the accusers; after which they went through the Congregation to have them sign a paper. In that way the number grew to thirteen, according to G. Vos, and they left the Church, not for their faith, but because of partisanship. At first they looked for refuge to those under the cross at Zwolle... but they seeing this, and knowing about the terrible quarrels here in Kampen, of casting an improper accusation on their leader, did not want them in their Congregation. Now the way for them was cut off. They then turned back to the Seceders and their principles, with which they could not agree at first. Now they call upon the teachers of the new regulations and statutes; they accepted them and they became a new congregation. It is evident that this was not of faith, after God's law to His honour; but to find a way out of their predicament.

We don't learn much from this. But it appears that his old adversary, elder G. Vos, played an important role in this account and also that the controversy became so heated, that the malcontents separated and established their own congregation in Kampen. According to Dr. F. L. Bos they instituted a new Christian Secession Congregation in Kampen, which initially was led by Rev. Postma of Zwolle, but since 1853 by a son of Rev. Hendrik de Cock.

Of course, at first, this group did not have their own church-building.

Mr. Don, the keeper of the archives of Kampen, was so good to tell me, that in the beginning they met in the bakery of deacon Heukels, a corner house on de Burgwal, over against the, at that time, infirmary, now youth hos-

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

tel.

There were not sufficient seats in that place, and so the people were requested to bring their own!

This group, which initially existed of only 13 persons, increased fast in numbers. Already in 1854 this congregation existed of 300 persons. Rev. de Cock and his consistory soon had to look for a bigger building. They bought a couple of buildings in the Hofstraat behind the Burgwal Church, which were renovated into a building they could use for their meetings. Two times they enlarged the building, yet after some time it proved again to be too small. When a suitable place could be bought, consistory decided to buy it for 20,000 guilders.

At the place of the manor house they built the present church-building, and the stable was turned into a parsonage.

Rev. Klinkert of Zwolle who had been loyal to Hoksbergen during the above conflict, by refusing to take in any of the malcontents, came to be a good friend of Hoksbergen.

The improved relationship was reason for Rev. Klinkert to launch another approach to see if the Kampen pastor and his 'small' congregation could be persuaded to join the existing Churches.

It seems that at first Hoksbergen liked the idea.

When in 1851, the Synod of the Dordt Reformed Churches met in Apeldoorn, Rev. Klinkert requested for the Kampen group if they could again join the Dordt Reformed Churches. Synod appointed a committee, existing of the two ministers, Klinkert and Plug and two elders, to look into the matter. This committee was sent to Kampen with the mandate to suggest to the congregation, "if they declared to be united with the doctrine, dis-

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

cipline and administration of our fathers." At the same time brother Hoksbergen was asked to submit to a little test, that in the future he would be acknowledged by the other congregations to be a minister in good standing.

But of course this last condition was just a little too much for the 51 year old elder, who for thirteen years had been a pastor "with profit" for his congregation. Before this he had refused a similar request with the words: *zollen de kienders de vaders ondervragen?* "shall the children examine the fathers?" He refused, and the Churches were not united! Hoksbergen was again bothered by an ecclesiastical assembly!

And so he and his followers remained in isolation.

They still remained in isolation, when in 1869 a union came into being at Middelburg between the Christian Secession Congregations and the Kruisgezinden.

It is not clear why Hoksbergen did not give in at that time. He could not any longer fulminate against the Utrecht Church Order, for that stumbling block was taken away already in 1840. The Seceders had since long come back from the decision "sin" as Hoksbergen called it, to request the Government for authorization. They never had much pleasure from the authorization, and especially after 1850 it was no longer of present interest. Even the objection that he would no more be acknowledged by others was not valid anymore. At Middelburg, the Kruisgezinden had received complete satisfaction about this point.

Was it the stubborn farmer who refused, or the fear that he would not be counted any longer when his congregation united with the Seceders, for he knew he could not compete with the well-known pastor W.H. Gispén who was at that time minister in Kampen?

Or was it fear that maybe his congregation would fall

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

apart in little groups, when union became a fact?

We can only guess at his motives.

It is a fact that at this time there were again problems in his Congregation. Several members by now were looking for another pastor. Some of those who opposed him were the people with whose money the building on the Burgwal was purchased. For many years already they waited for their money to be paid back, but Hoksbergen told them repeatedly that there was no money!

It was the sixth of February 1870, that those who opposed him had the church building locked up with chains, while the police guarded the building. They looked for their money and desired a new pastor.

The latter demand was superfluous. Already on January 16, the teaching elder, tired of combat, resigned from office with a sermon on Rev. 3:1-6. Two weeks after that he preached his farewell with a sermon on Acts 20: 28-32. Could it be he applied this Bible passage to himself?

It is possible that all these things hastened his death, for within two weeks, on Feb. 19, 1870, this remarkable man died. There is no doubt that this man had undoubtedly many shortcomings, but to whom cannot be denied that certainly he was a man of deep piety, and who in his own way never wanted to be anything than "servant" of his Lord.

We now combine several sources from which we read the further story of this Dordt Congregation is as follows:

After Hoksbergen died, the Congregation did not flourish anymore. In 1871, 22 members under the leadership of elder Vander Veen, went over to the Christian Reformed Church (originated in Middelburg in 1869).

November, 1871, teaching elder Elias Fransen is

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

installed, by the laying on of hands, by the elders Kloosterziel and Hulleman. He laboured here as their minister until March 21, 1886, when he went to Lisse.

It was under his leadership they established "the Statutes of the Dordt Reformed Congregation of Kampen."

During the time they were vacant, the teaching elder Diedericus Wijting (by Rev. Los of Goes ordained) led the services. He was called, declined, but was again called and preached his first sermon as their minister, May 6, 1888.

A "tender" question which was not solved in Goes was brought to consistory by Rev. Fransen from Lisse, with the result that Rev. Wijting was suspended for the duration of six weeks.

He did not accept the censure and preached for part of the Congregation (among which elder Post) in the building for "Christelijke Belangen", the present City-theatre. After nine months Rev. Wijting received a call to the Oud Gereformeerde Gemeente of Zeist and departed thence in June 1889.

Some of those who withdrew returned with confession of guilt.

The services were now led by Rev. Maliepaard of the Vrije Gemeente in The Hague, and Mr. Snappert, teaching elder from Nijkerk.

It seems that Rev. Maliepaard stirred up the smoldering fire that existed between some consistory members and Rev. Fransen of Lisse. That difference was settled, but now some did not like their teaching elder, Mr. Snappert.

Then we enter the year 1891. Possibly under the influence of Rev. Maliepaard, part of the Congregation under the leadership of J. Post and W. van Dijken desire to be instituted as Vrije Gemeente. The other part under

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

the leadership of de Groot and Fikse liked to remain with the present order. The latter two traveled to Lisse where they discussed the problem with Rev. Fransen and his consistory. They appointed them as "provisional elders." They took a letter home with them, stating that the "old elders" were suspended.

"Lisse" and the lawyer Mr. J. Nanninga Uiterdijk counseled to close the church. The Zwolle court of justice assigned the building to the group, Fikse and de Groot. The others left, took the minutes and official documents; later, they deliberately burned them.

The latter now gathered in a house on the Groenestraat, and Rev. Maliepaard often preached for them there. This became the present Oud-Gereformeerde Gemeente; they have their church-building on the Burgwal, just past the Lutheran Church.

The Fikse/de Groot group considered themselves the lawful continuation of the Dordt Reformed congregation. In September 1893 they received the earlier teaching elder, Rev. Janse from the Doleance Church of Sloten, as their pastor.

There was only one quarrel during his stay there; that was when elder Bosch did not come to Church anymore, because he did not like Rev. Janse.

We also read that during this period the organist Sollic was discharged, because the children of Nijhuis offered to play the organ for free.

November 2, 1898, Rev. Janse left for Barneveld.

For six years the congregation is without a minister. During that time diverse problems arose. An accusation against elder J. Meurer results in him laying down the office (1902). The year following three members of consistory: W. Fransen, J. Fransen and D. v.d. Velde leave consistory and are no more acknowledged as members.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

On February 1904, Rev. J. Overduin installed his son Daniel Cornelis, teaching elder of Lisse, as teaching elder in this place. After being examined by his father June 5, his father ordains him into the ministry.

An attempt to unite again with the Oud-Gereformeerde gemeente failed, because the oud-gereformeerde elder J. Post is irreconcilable.

October 1906, Rev. Overduin leaves for Amsterdam. Following this they are vacant for 26 years.

1907 saw a union between the Kruisgezinden that were still left from 1869, and the Ledeboerianen. The delegate from Kampen, elder Fikse, was present at the official union which took place in Rotterdam.

In April 1908 there ensued another conflict between the elders Post and Room with the result that the latter laid down his office.

A renewed attempt to become reconciled with the Oud-Gereformeerden is a failure.

October 28, 1913, consistory decides to discontinue the name Dordt-Gereformeerde Gemeente, and go under the name of Gereformeerde Gemeente.

Finally, in fall 1932, the congregation received a new minister in Johannes Vreugdenhil, who came from Bruinisse. In 1938 he left for Rijssen and was followed by Rev. Herman Ligtenberg, who remained with the congregation until July 21, 1942.

The following year, June 9, 1943, Rev. Vreugdenhil came for the second time to Kampen. He only served the congregation for one more year; he died July 19, 1944.

Rev. Adrianus Verhagen, came from Lisse, and was installed here by Rev. R. Kok from Veenendaal.

In 1950, Rev. Kok was suspended and deposed. Again schism in the Gereformeerde gemeenten. Rev. de Kok and his followers left the denomination and in 1959

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

joined the Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk.

Under the leadership of Rev. Verhage the "klumpieskarke" on the Burgwal was closed, and in September of the same year the new building on the Ebbingestraat, the place where the city greenhouse had been, was put into use.

1953 saw another schism in the Gereformeerde Gemeenten as a result of the Steenblok conflict, when the Gereformeerde Gemeenten became two separate groups.

The Gereformeerde Gemeente of Kampen did not follow Steenblok, nor did they follow Kok.

During the summer of 1955, Rev. Verhagen left the congregation in Kampen, and since Sept. 2, 1958, the Gereformeerde gemeente on the Ebbingstreet is served by Rev. J. van Haaren as their minister.

"Teaching Elder" at Kampen

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